

Message Text

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43

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00

NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 A-01 OPR-02

SY-05 OC-06 CCO-00 SSO-00 SCCT-01 IO-13 OMB-01 TRSE-00

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R 251338Z JUL 76

FM AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8813

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

DIA WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L DAMASCUS 4883

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS SY

SUBJ: PROSPECTS FOR UNREST IN HAMA INCREASE WITH DEATH OF
EXTREMIST MUSLIM LEADER

1. EMBOFF MET WITH MFA AMERICAN AFFAIRS DIRECTOR JULY 21
AND DURING CONVERSATION ASKED ABOUT RUMORS THAT TWO MORE
ALAWITES HAD BEEN MURDERED IN A NORTHERN CITY. SHOUFFI
REPLIED THAT THERE HAD BEEN ATTEMPTED ASSASSINATION AGAINST
TWO MORE ALAWITES IN HOMS AND THEY NOW IN HOSPITAL BEING
TREATED FOR SERIOUS WOUNDS.

2. SHOUFFI SAID MORE SERIOUS EVENT WAS DEATH JULY 19 OF
SHEIKH MARWAN HADID, LEADER OF EXTREMIST MUSLIM FACTION
"YOUTH OF MUHAMMAD" IN HAMA (DAMASCUS 1244). ACCORDING
TO SHOUFFI, HADID HAD BEEN IN MEZZE PRISON AND HAD BEEN
FASTING FOR NEARLY TWO MONTHS TO PRESSURE AUTHORITIES
INTO PROVIDING MEDICAL TREATMENT FOR HIS BROKEN RIBS.
AROUND 60TH DAY, SARG OFFICIALS PREVAILED UPON HIS TWO
BROTHERS TO PERSUADE HIM TO END HIS FAST. HIS
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HEALTH CONDITION HAD DETERIORATED AND AS A RESULT,

HE WAS TRANSFERRED TO HARASTE MILITARY HOSPITAL BUT DIED ABOUT ONE WEEK AFTER TRANSFER. FAMILY PRESSED SARG TO PERMIT HIS BURIAL IN HAMA BUT AUTHORITIES REFUSED AND BURIED HIM IN DAMASCUS. SHOEFI COMMENTED THAT REGIME APPARENTLY AFRAID BURIAL IN HAMA WOULD TOUCH OFF SEVERE DISTURBANCES. HE SAID THAT HADID'S DEATH COULD HAVE SERIOUS REPERCUSSIONS DUE TO HIS WIDE AND DEVOTED FOLLOWING IN HAMA.

3. COMMENT: WE AGREE WITH SHOEFI THAT HADID'S DEATH DURING CAPTIVITY COULD LEAD TO REPERCUSSIONS AND EXACERBATION OF TENSIONS BETWEEN SARG AND CITIZENS OF HAMA.
PELLETREAU

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